

# Church Basics: Introduction & Eldership

Whitton, March 22, 2026

## I. First Things First

## II. Biblical Church Polity

**Definition:** Elder-Led, Deacon-Served, Congregationalism.

## III. Two-ish Explicit Offices Within the Church

- Christ is “head over everything for the church” (**Ephesians 1:22; cf. Colossians 1:18**).
- The church is “his body, of which he is the Savior” (**Ephesians 5:23**).
  
- **Philippians 1:1:** To all the saints... with the overseers and deacons.
- **1 Timothy 3:1-13/Titus 1:5-8:** Outlines qualifications for overseers and deacons.

## IV. Eldership

### 1. Three Terms, One Office

- **Elder (*presbuteros*):** Focuses on the dignity and maturity of the office.
- **Overseer (*episkopos*):** Focuses on the function of management and watching over.
- **Pastor/Shepherd (*poimen*):** Focuses on the care and feeding of the flock.

**Acts 20:**<sup>17</sup> Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him... <sup>28</sup> Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

**1 Peter 5:** So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: <sup>2</sup> shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;

### 2. The Necessity of Plurality

### **3. The Qualifications & Character of an Elder**

### **4. Elder-Led vs. Elder-Rule**

### **5. So, What do Elders do?**

#### **I. The Ministry of the Word (Teaching & Feeding)**

#### **II. The Ministry of Oversight (Leading)**

#### **III. The Ministry of the Soul (Shepherding & Protecting)**

#### **IV. The Ministry of Example (Modeling & Character)**

#### **V. The Ministry of Intercession (Prayer)**

1 Timothy		Titus		
<u>3:1</u>	one who has aspiration to the office			He aspires to the role of being an elder, bishop, overseer, pastor, shepherd. This does not exclude the possibility that he is sought out and urged to be an elder. But no pressure should be used that would result in an unwilling, half-hearted service.
<u>3:2</u>	above reproach	<u>1:6</u> , <u>7</u>	above reproach	He lives in a way that gives no cause for others to think badly of the church or the faith or the Lord.
<u>3:2</u>	husband of one wife	<u>1:6</u>	husband of one wife	The question is probably one of notoriety. What is this man's reputation with regard to whether he has had one wife or not?
<u>3:2</u> <u>3:3</u>	sober-minded not a drunkard	<u>1:8</u> <u>1:7</u>	disciplined not . . . a drunkard	He exercises self-control and mastery of his appetites. He prizes freedom from enslavements to such a degree that no bondage is yielded to.
<u>3:2</u>	self-controlled	<u>1:8</u>	self-controlled	He is sensible. He is prudent. He is reasonable. He has good judgment. He sees things as they really are. He knows himself well. He understands people and how they respond. He is in touch with reality, such that there are no great gaps between what he sees in himself and what others see in him.
<u>3:2</u>	respectable			He is honorable and dignified. He comports himself in situations so as not to step on toes unnecessarily. He does not offend against propriety.
<u>3:2</u>	hospitable	<u>1:8</u>	hospitable	He loves strangers. He is given to being kind to newcomers. He makes them feel at home. His home is open for ministry. He does not shrink back from having guests; he is not a secretive person.
<u>3:2</u>	able to teach	<u>1:9</u>	able to give instruction	He is an apt teacher, skilled in teaching. He knows biblical doctrine well and is able to explain it to people. He is astute enough theologically that he can spot serious error and show a person why it is wrong and harmful.
<u>3:3</u>	not violent	<u>1:7</u>	not . . . violent	He is not pugnacious or belligerent. His temper is under control. He is not given to quarreling or fighting. He has a conciliatory bent. His feelings are not worn on his sleeve. He does not carry resentments. He is not hypercritical.
<u>3:3</u>	gentle			He is not harsh or mean-spirited. He is inclined to tenderness. He resorts to toughness only when the

				circumstances commend this form of love. His words are not acid or divisive but helpful and encouraging.
<u>3:3</u>	not quarrelsome	<u>1:7</u>	not arrogant or quick-tempered	He is peaceable. He is lowly in his demeanor, not speaking much of himself or his achievements. He counts others better than himself and is quick to serve. He sincerely gives God the credit and honor for any accomplishments.
<u>3:3</u>	not a lover of money	<u>1:7</u>	not . . . greedy for gain	He puts the kingdom first in all he does. His lifestyle does not reflect a love of luxury. He is a generous giver. He is not anxious about his financial future. He is not so money-oriented that ministry decisions revolve around this issue.
<u>3:4-5</u>	a good manager of his own household; cares for God's church; keeps his children submissive	<u>1:6-7</u>	a steward; his children are faithful, not insubordinate	He is the leader of a well-ordered household. If he has children, they are submissive (not perfect, but well-disciplined, so that they do not blatantly and regularly disregard the instructions of their parents). His children revere him. He is a loving and responsible spiritual leader in the home. He respects and tenderly loved his wife, if he is married. Their relationship is openly admirable.
<u>3:6</u>	not a recent convert			He is a mature believer. There are evidences in his life that humility is a fixed virtue and not easily overturned.
<u>3:7</u>	well thought of by outsiders			He meets the standards of the world for decency and respectability (as the standards of the church are higher).
		<u>1:8</u>	a lover of good	He loves to be involved in doing good. More than merely doing good, he has a bent and love to see goodness done. He is an expansive person.
		<u>1:8</u>	upright	He cares about whether people are treated fairly. He wants to see justice in the world at all levels.
		<u>1:8</u>	holy	He is a person of devotion to Christ with a life of prayer and meditation. He loves worship and has a deep personal relationship with the Lord.